



Toni N. Harp  
Mayor

**City of New Haven**  
**Office of the Economic Development Administrator**  
**165 Church Street**  
**New Haven, Connecticut 06510**



Matthew Nemerson  
*Economic Development*  
Administrator

**Environment Committee**  
**February 27, 2015**

Representative Albis, Senator Kennedy, and members of the Environment Committee, I'm Stephen Fontana, Deputy Director of Economic Development for the City of New Haven, and on behalf of Mayor Toni N. Harp, I wish to thank you for raising **HB 5708**, AAC The Connecticut Transit Site In New Haven, and to testify in favor of it.

The state formerly used property at 470 James Street in New Haven ("the Connecticut Transit" site) to store and maintain public buses. When it decided to leave the site several years ago, however, the state put off cleaning up the contamination (principally, oils) in the soil beneath it, preferring to wait until it could do so in conjunction with an economic redevelopment plan.

Thankfully, we're now experiencing resurgent interest in the site, in part because of its size and uniquely valuable location near I-91. To facilitate its redevelopment, however, we need to secure the state's commitment to pay for its cleanup. To that end, we've been having extremely productive conversations with officials at DECD since early 2014 about presenting them with an economic redevelopment plan in concert with which they can perform that remediation.

Unfortunately, last year the General Assembly sought to transfer this property to the City without first having either of those two ingredients in place. Worse, the legislative language compounded this shortcoming by assigning to the City complete responsibility both for the costs of cleanup and liability for that contamination. The City does not have the financial wherewithal to accept responsibility for the property's cleanup costs, much less all liability for it.

Last year's conveyance therefore advances neither the property's environmental remediation, a key goal of this committee, nor the property's economic redevelopment, a key goal of our City and my department. This bill is critically important because it fixes that conveyance in a way that enables the cleanup and return to productive use of a property that otherwise will remain contaminated and blighted for the foreseeable future.

We look forward to working with you and our partners at DECD to develop the appropriate legislative language, a draft example of which I attach to this testimony, to remedy this problem for reference purposes.

Since we believe that we can and should effect a proper conveyance that both cleans up the property and allows us to redevelop it, **we respectfully request that you act favorably on HB 5708**. Thank you for your consideration.



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Sec. X. Section 3 of special act 14-23 is amended to read as follows (*Effective from passage*): (a) Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes, the Commissioner of Transportation, upon the approval of the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, shall convey to the city of New Haven a parcel of land located in the city of New Haven and any improvement upon said parcel, at a cost equal to the administrative costs of making such conveyance. Said parcel of land has an area of approximately 6.95 acres and is identified as lot 1100 in Block 603 of city of New Haven Tax Assessor's Map 181, located at 470 James Street. The conveyance shall be subject to the approval of the State Properties Review Board.

(b) The city of New Haven shall use said parcel of land and any improvement upon said parcel for municipal purposes, including the relocation of public service departments, and for economic development purposes. If the city of New Haven:

- (1) Does not use said parcel or improvement for said purposes;
- (2) Does not retain ownership of all of said parcel or improvement; or
- (3) Leases all or any portion of said parcel or improvement;

the parcel and improvement shall revert to the state of Connecticut.

(c) The State Properties Review Board shall complete its review of the conveyance of said parcel of land not later than thirty days after it receives a proposed agreement from the Department of Administrative Services. The land shall remain under the care and control of the Department of Transportation until the land is remediated to the criteria established for industrial and commercial properties in GB-designated areas in the Connecticut Remediation Standard Regulations as defined by regulations adopted pursuant to Section 22a-133k of the Connecticut General Statutes, and a conveyance is made in accordance with the provisions of this section. The State Treasurer shall execute and deliver any deed or instrument necessary for a conveyance under this section, which deed or instrument shall include provisions to carry out the purposes of subsection (b) of this section. The Commissioner of Transportation shall have the sole responsibility for all other incidents of such conveyance.